

PROPOSAL 102 – 5 AAC 07.331. Gillnet specifications and operations. Change gillnet mesh size from six inches or smaller to five and three-quarters inches or smaller in District 4 of the Kuskokwim Area, as follows:

5 AAC 07.331. Gillnet specifications and operations is amended to readL:

- (d)
 - (2) salmon may be taken only with gillnets of 5 3/4-inch [6-inch] or smaller mesh.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Due to the closed and highly regulatory restrictions on the harvest of the Chinook salmon in District W-4, commercial fisherman, have foregone the opportunity to harvest the more abundant sockeye and chum salmon. Sockeye and chum salmon runs overlap the Chinook salmon run which makes it a challenge to minimize the commercial harvest of the more abundant species. Additionally, the nature and design of the commercial salmon fishery in the “W-4” district makes it an incredible challenge to utilize alternative gear to avoid and minimize the harvest of Chinook salmon. Many of the commercial fisherman of District W-4 (Quinhagak) depend on the commercial fishery as their sole source of income for the few short months it is open. By reducing the mesh size from 6 inches to 5 3/4 inches, this would allow commercial fisherman the opportunity to harvest sockeye and chum salmon during their peak run timing while providing the Chinook salmon the opportunity to escape during times of conservation. Should the Chinook salmon conservation be lifted, then so should the mesh size reduction, allowing commercial fisherman in district W-4 to go back up to 6-inch or less in mesh size.

(Editor note: 5 AAC 07.331(d) also addresses District 5.)

PROPOSED BY: Native Village of Kwinhagak (EF-C15-107)
